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The translation shows on the whole an improvement over that of the first two volumes, apparently a new hand being at work. The method, however, is a bad one, and it may well excite wonder that so good a result has been produced. The original has been reduced about five per cent. in bulk by omitting a sentence or two out of about half the paragraphs and by pruning many of the sentences of a clause or two. At the same time a good many of the citations and elucidations contained in the foot-notes of the original have been omitted. At a few points additional paragraphs have been inserted, but without materially enhancing the utility of the work for English readers. The rendering into English is marked by comparatively few downright errors, yet is frequently perplexing. The weakest point is in the matter of political terms. The translator apparently has very little familiarity with English political terminology and is constantly getting homonyms instead of precise equivalents. The proof-reading has been rather carelessly done, especially in the matter of dates.

FRANK MALOY ANDERSON.

BOOKS OF AMERICAN HISTORY

The American Nation: A History. Edited by ALBERT BUSHNELL HART, Professor of History, Harvard University. In twenty-seven volumes. (New York and London: Harper and Brothers. 1904-1908.)

As the various volumes of "The American Nation" have appeared they have been reviewed in the *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, but the completion of the work is of sufficient importance to warrant the consideration of the series as a whole. That twenty-six volumes by twenty-four different authors have been brought out within six years from the inception of the work and within three years after the publication of the first volume, is of itself a notable achievement. The credit for it is to be ascribed primarily to the untiring energy of the editor, the effects of which have been felt by those in no way connected with the enterprise. The results of this forcing process are evident throughout all the series—more so, somewhat surprisingly, in the later volumes—but the ill effects are more than counterbalanced by the advantage of obtaining a comprehensive treatment of American history that represents contemporary scholarship. It is impossible to say of this as one does of most co-operative histories, that the first volume has become out of date before the last has appeared.

"The principle of the whole series", wrote the editor in his introduction to the first volume, "is that every book shall be written by an expert for laymen; and every volume must therefore stand the double test of accuracy and readableness." In the course of the publication of "The American Nation", the writer of the present review has followed

the criticisms that have been printed, and he has also obtained expressions of personal opinion from different people in different parts of the country upon the merits of the various volumes that make up the series. The specialist generally has been disappointed in the treatment of his particular field, either because it was inadequate and sometimes inaccurate, or because he found in it nothing that was new; but this same critic would grow enthusiastic over some of the volumes outside of his own field; and the layman has been equally enthusiastic over them all. So many volumes by so many different authors must necessarily vary, and vary greatly, by any standards of judgment that may be set up, yet the series as a whole has achieved a somewhat surprising degree of excellence both in readableness and in accuracy, according to the ordinary acceptance of the latter term. It is evident, then, that one great purpose of the work has been accomplished, and the present reviewer would add his testimony as to the usefulness of the series in his own studies, and particularly as to its helpfulness as collateral reading for the classes to which he lectures.

Thus far it has been easy to speak in general terms and of the series as a whole, but the moment one goes farther and considers the history more in detail a difficulty is encountered. It is not that the various books differ in treatment or are of different merit, but it is that the first fifteen volumes present a fairly consecutive and reasonably well-proportioned narrative and the later volumes do not. As a sixteenth volume the editor interpolates an essay on *Slavery and Abolition*, excellent in itself, but destructive of the balance and continuity of the series: then, four volumes upon the Civil War, its causes and its consequences, in spite of the importance and interest attaching to that crisis, seem out of proportion to the treatment of other topics; and the last volumes, except for the editor's concluding summary, are distinctly inadequate, which is doubtless due in part to the nature of their subject and to the limitations of space.

Another question arises, however, and of deeper import, in that it involves the ultimate value of the work that is presented. A somewhat different aspect is put upon the editor's "double test of accuracy and of readableness" by the sentence immediately following: "American history loses nothing in dramatic climax because it is true or because it is truly told." Accuracy and truth are here used as if they were synonymous terms, but are they not in reality very different things? Is not Woodrow Wilson more nearly right when, in his essay "On the Writing of History", he says that "the facts do not of themselves constitute the truth"? Surely there is a world of meaning in his closing sentence, with which he sums up his whole contention: "There is an art of lying; there is equally an art—an infinitely more difficult art—of telling the truth." The question that arises is whether this series really tells the truth regarding American history. It purports to be a history of the American nation: "For this is not intended to be simply a polit-

ical or constitutional history: it must include the social life of the people, their religion, their literature, and their schools. It must include their economic life, occupations, labor systems, and organizations of capital. It must include their wars and their diplomacy, the relations of community with community, and of the nation with other nations." To tell the truth upon such a comprehensive scale is assuredly a difficult task!

The most obvious fact in American history is the expansion of a few thousand colonists fringing the Atlantic coast into a people of nearly a hundred millions occupying the entire central part of the North American continent and holding many outlying possessions. The physical facts of this expansion, that is, the mere acquisition of territory and attendant problems, are well brought out in the entire series, but there is little genuine appreciation of its profound importance in developing American characteristics as well as American character. This expansion is the result of colonization on a scale and with a success that is unrivalled. We are accustomed to say that our colonial system is unique, in that the territories are eventually incorporated as states into the Union. But this is not merely a political fact, for the colonists become an integral part of the parent nation, and become in turn the progenitors of new colonies. If such a process long continues, it is inevitable that in the course of time the colonists should not merely outnumber the parent stock; they will themselves be the nation. Such has been the history of America and the Americans.

If there be an American nation, its basis is the American people, and the American people are a composite of several races and many nationalities. "What is an American?" is the subject which Crèvecoeur took for one of his "Letters", and he answered his own question by saying: "They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race, now called Americans, has arisen." He was speaking of his neighbors in the middle colonies, and specifically excepted the "Eastern provinces . . . as being the unmixed descendants of Englishmen". But Crèvecoeur was writing at the time of the Revolution and the process he was observing became more general with the spread of population beyond the Alleghanies and the intermingling of settlers from various sections, until at the present day his remark is true of practically all America. In other words, the mingling of the various ingredients in our composite nationality is the result of a process that has long been at work, and that has been accelerated, indeed made possible, by our expansion. The appreciation of this is fundamental to the understanding of American history, in particular if that history is to be the history of the American nation. Yet one looks in vain for that appreciation in this series. In the last volume, the editor briefly sketches or rather suggests the process of this development, but it is noticeable that his references to the preceding volumes are very few and that they have but little direct bearing.

In the same way, American characteristics are only to be explained

through American expansion. To use again the oft-quoted sentence of Mr. Bryce, "The West may be called the most distinctly American part of America, because the points in which it differs from the East are the points in which America as a whole differs from Europe." This is not a sudden achievement, it is the result of forces constantly in operation since the first colonies were established on the Atlantic seaboard. The scene of action has been the frontier. Again the reviewer notices the recognition of this feature in the editor's closing volume; he wonders if the editor is not responsible also for the insertion, indeed for the emphasizing of the frontier line in various maps of population and settlement scattered through the whole series; but he wonders still more that nearly all of the "associated scholars" fail to mention this subject at all.

It is a pleasure to find in this series, especially in the earlier volumes, little ground for the common charge against American scholarship that it fails to take European conditions sufficiently into account. The reader may take exception to the treatment of certain periods and subjects, but he cannot fail to be impressed by the advances that are being made in the study of European history in the effort rightly to interpret American development. On the other hand it is evident that much of our historical study is still laboring under the disadvantage of being restricted by the Eastern point of view. Even if one be inclined to minimize the importance of the frontier and the West in the earlier part of American history, certain facts in the later period are undeniable. Population beyond the Alleghanies increased at a rapid rate, and from the time when the steamboat was in successful operation on the Western waters, the course of American development was changed. That is, when the "up-stream era of navigation" began, and it became possible to supply the Western settlements through the port of New Orleans, the East turned squarely about and faced the West, for its best efforts were required in the endeavor to preserve the home markets. This happened to coincide with the close of the War of 1812, when domestic manufactures had received a fresh impetus from other causes. But from that moment, he who would write the history of America can no longer do so from the standpoint of Europe or of the Atlantic coast, his viewpoint must be that of one who moved, not with the vanguard, but with the mass of population farther and farther into the West. Possibly his eyes should be more frequently turned towards Eastern centres of commerce and politics, but he should also look and with prophetic vision into the newer regions of the West. American expansion has been the most potent single factor in determining our economic and commercial development, and it has been responsible for many of our greatest political issues.

One or two of the volumes leave little to be desired in their treatment of this phase of American development, but others mention it only incidentally, and evidently with no appreciation of its significance. The

later volumes in particular are disappointing in this respect. It is instructive, though hardly illuminating, to read: "Though the war was so absorbing, the year 1862 was marked by several legislative measures of lasting consequence in civil matters. The most important were the act to secure homesteads to actual settlers; the . . .", etc. But it is a consolation to find that the Homestead Act is also mentioned in the index. Of course, the time has not yet come when the history of America since the Civil War can be finally or even acceptably written, but one could wish for a little more of the point of view that was shown in one of the first announcements of William Garrott Brown's *History of the United States since the Civil War*: "The reconstruction of the southern states . . . cannot be regarded as the foremost event, or series of events, in the period covered by the first volume. Of greater permanent importance was the occupation of the vast region beyond the Mississippi, so that the Pacific Coast became at last our true frontier, and the economic and social changes which this movement of population caused. It was the development of the West, the extension of our railroad system, and particularly the shifting of agriculture westward which made possible our more recent rapid advance to the commanding place which we now hold in production, in commerce, and in diplomacy."

The present reviewer is not holding a brief for the West, he is voicing a plea for a history of the American people, or, if you will, of the American nation. The points upon which he has touched are simply some of the things which he finds more or less lacking in the series under consideration, which was promised to be a "comprehensive work" A paragraph, a page, or even a chapter here and there is not sufficient. It is not recognition that is wanted, it is appreciation, and an appreciation such that these things will be made a vital part of the narrative. Then, and then only, will the truth be told.

The justification for his criticism the reviewer finds in the editor's closing volume of the series. The book is somewhat disconnected and shows evidences of haste in composition; it is not a "summary", nor even a "restatement" of the contents of the previous volumes, for as already shown, much that is here set forth finds little or no support in the rest of the series; but it represents more nearly, than does the series as a whole, the point of view in the study of American history that has recently been pressing into the foreground. In that respect the series is hardly indicative of the best contemporary scholarship, it is rather that of a decade or more ago. With much that is good, and much that is helpful, "The American Nation" is not an epoch-making work, it is rather epoch-marking. Save for an occasional exception, the volumes represent the end of the old and not the beginning of the new history that is being studied and written.

MAX FARRAND.